

Make no mistake, if the war against terrorism is lost, it will not be lost by our magnificent troops on the battlefield. It will be lost right here at home by politicians who lose their resolve.

AMERICA'S ECONOMY IS IN TROUBLE

(Ms. SCHAKOWSKY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, the President would have us believe that all is well with our economy. But the American people know better. Despite finally receiving some good economic news, middle-class families in this country continue to fall behind as incomes remain flat or drop.

Gas prices fluctuate, health care costs soar, and home heating costs skyrocket. Americans this week are paying nearly 70 cents more per gallon on gas now than in the first year that President Bush came to office.

According to the National Energy Assistance Directors Association, the average family using heating oil or natural gas will pay nearly three times the amount families paid the first winter President Bush was in office.

For the past 5 years, health care costs have increased by nearly 60 percent, driving up the number of uninsured by 6 million since the beginning of the Bush administration. Under President Bush, college tuition has gone up about 40 percent, even taking inflation into account.

Meanwhile, real household income fell for the fourth year in a row in 2004. Together, America can do better than an economy in which middle-class families are seeing falling incomes in the face of rising prices. The American people know it and so should the President.

BORDER SECURITY AND PASSPORTS

(Mr. POE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, the 9/11 Commission report concluded: "Americans should not be exempt from carrying passports when they enter the United States, nor should Canadians or Mexicans. The 9/11 experience shows that terrorists study and exploit America's vulnerabilities."

Exempting anyone from carrying a passport when crossing into the United States is blatantly ignoring the commission's suggestions and is posing yet another serious vulnerability in our country's border security.

Neither Mexican nor Canadian visitors are required to show a passport to enter the United States, despite the fact that they rank number one and number four respectively as the largest sources of illegal immigration in the United States. Small wonder the governments of those nations oppose passports to enter America.

We need to do what is best for the United States, not what is best for Canada or Mexico. The 9/11 Commission stated that the United States is still at risk by not requiring passports to enter this country. Our border is seriously vulnerable. What is it going to take for us to figure this out?

Congress must make serious changes in our immigration policy before we lose the sovereignty of this Nation and become a Nation illegally colonized by other nations. That's just the way it is.

AMERICA'S WEAK ECONOMY

(Mrs. MALONEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, data released this Monday on productivity and wages show why the American people do not believe President Bush when he says our economic prospects are as bright as they have been for a long time.

Yes, productivity is strong, and the economy is growing. But the benefits of that growth are showing up in the bottom lines of companies, not in the paychecks of the American worker.

While productivity grew at a 4.7 percent annual rate in the third quarter, workers' pay, including their benefits, shrank at a 1.4 percent rate. Americans are working harder and harder and producing more and more, but they are getting paid less. This is not a bright economy.

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ANOTHER IRAQI MILESTONE

(Mr. SHIMKUS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to thank the Latvian government for extending their troop commitment to Iraq for another year. Last January, 8.5 million Iraqis voted. Last October, more than 10 million voted. In both of these elections, the Iraqi people refused to be cowed by terrorist threats.

A week from today, Iraqis will, once again, defy terrorists and go to the polls a third time this year. They will choose their first 4-year parliament since Saddam Hussein was removed from power.

More than 300 parties and coalitions are registered for this election, and even those who opposed the October constitutional referendum have organized for this vote.

In his speech last week, President Bush mentioned Marine Corporal Jeffrey Starr who died fighting in Iraq. In a letter found after his death he wrote, "I don't regret going, everybody dies, but few get to do it for something as important as freedom. It may seem confusing why we are in Iraq, it's not for me. I'm here helping these people, so they can live the way we live."

Mr. Speaker, it is because of soldiers like Corporal Starr that Iraqis will one

day live like we live, under freedom and democracy.

SWEET TRADE

(Mr. DEFAZIO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, well, just in time for the holidays, the Republicans have prepared a bevy of treats known as tax cuts favoring those who earn over \$300,000 a year. One of the most delectable is a 60 percent tax cut in the tax on stock dividends for millionaires. It costs \$13 billion in revenue foregone, unfortunately. But with new found concern about the deficit, the Republicans are going to pay for that tax cut for the millionaires by raising fees and interest rates on students who are struggling to get an education.

What a sweet trade. More tax cuts for billionaires as they trickle down on the students who are struggling to live the American dream.

AMERICAN ECONOMY FLOURISHES

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, workers throughout our country have over 4.25 million reasons to agree that the American economy continues to improve under Republican leadership.

Since President Bush signed the Jobs and Growth Act of 2003, the news about the economy has been overwhelmingly positive. 4.5 million new jobs have been created. The unemployment rate is lower than the average of the past three decades. The economy grew at 4.3 percent over the past 10 quarters. Tax receipts increased by \$274 billion in just one year after the tax cuts, the largest increase ever due to economic growth.

As the Republican Congress continues to pass legislation that will decrease the tax burden upon American workers and eliminate excessive government regulations, our economy will continue to flourish. We will work hard to ensure that the American people, not the Federal Government, have control over their hard-earned money.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, we will never forget September 11, and the lifetime of service of the late Governor Carroll Campbell.

ECONOMY NOTHING TO BRAG ABOUT

(Mrs. MCCARTHY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. MCCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, when I am here in Washington I hear the administration and the House majority brag about how great our economy is,